



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky in Qualified Support of HB 5291, AAC
Reimbursement for Municipal Phosphorus Abatement Projects
Before the Environment Committee February 13, 2015

I offer qualified support for the bill, but seek language changes to the funding formula and a change to Section 3.

Wallingford is one of the towns facing a large expenditure (estimated by the town at \$15 to 19 million) for removal of phosphorous from effluent. Ironically, Wallingford (and other towns) *adds* phosphorous to drinking water to fight pipe corrosion. So the taxpayer is paying to *add* phosphorous to water, and the taxpayer is paying to *remove* phosphorus.

To promote a better solution to this technical problem, I worked with CT DEEP and my colleagues to offer more generous funding for towns who came forward early with clever technology to reduce their phosphorous. This was the intent of increased grants in PA 13-239 and PA 14-13. By this measurement, the adjoining town of Cheshire should have been a winner of the more generous grant as that town took the lead with innovation, but they received a rejection letter. My town also received a rejection letter. The language should be rewritten to reward innovation to reduce phosphorus—without a specific date.

Section 3 is written incorrectly. It adds USGS as scientific advisor to the river study, but USGS is a geological agency. The problem with phosphorus in the Quinnipiac River is biological: excess amounts of phosphorous are creating algae blooms and deteriorating water quality. On the Clean Water Act required report to Congress, the river is impaired for public recreation and aquatic life. The study in Section 3 should include a biological advisor with knowledge of the threshold creating algae blooms in this river system.

